

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 211347

FOR ALAN JAMES, USLOS DEL

FOLLOWING REPEAT BRUSSELS 15735 ACTION SECSTATE DATED AUG 16:

QTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 15735

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS
SUBJECT: LOS: RESUMED SEVENTH SESSION AND THE
CONTINENTAL SHELF

REF: STATE 18840

1. SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL POINTS, THE BELGIAN
FOREIGN MINISTRY CITES NEED TO CONSULT WITH EC PARTNERS.
IT ALSO EXPRESSES BOTH GENERAL CONCERN THAT THE COMMON
HERITAGE OF MANKIND NOT BE ERODED AND ITS SPECIFIC
INTEREST IN SEEING WHETHER WIDE-MARGIN EC STATES
MIGHT BE WILLING TO ALLOW COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO SHARE
IN EXPLOITATION OF THE MARGIN UNDER THE FORMER'S
NATIONAL JURISDICTION. ON THE WHOLE, BELGIANS ARE
NOT SANGUINE OVER POSSIBILITIES FOR PROGRESS AT THE
RESUMED SEVENTH SESSION. END SUMMARY.
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2. IN THE ABSENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY CHIEF OF LOS
AAFAIRS, ECUYER VAN DER ESSEN, WE OUTLINED REFTEL
POINTS TO HIS DEPUTY, HENRI NOLAERD, ON AUGUST 14.
NOLAERD SAID BELGIUM WOULD FORMULATE ITS POSITION
IN CONSULTATION WITH ITS EC PARTNERS. HE EXPLAINED
THAT, AS A NARROW MARGIN STATE, BELGIUM HAS NO DIRECT

MATERIAL INTEREST TO PROTECT IN SUPPORTING NATIONAL JURISDICTION OVER EXTENSIONS OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BEYOND 200 MILES. AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, BELGIUM IS CONCERNED THAT AREAS WHICH SHOULD CONSTITUTE COMMON HERITAGE OF MANKIND NOT BE WHITTLED DOWN. (IN THIS REGARD, NOLAERD CONCEDED THAT A COMBINATION OF THE IRISH DEFINITION FORMULA AND ADEQUATE PROVISIONS FOR REVENUE SHARING FROM EXPLOITATION OF AREAS BEYOND 200 MILES MIGHT MEET THESE CONCERNS.)

3. IN SEEMING CONTRADICTION TO THE ABOVE "DISINTERESTED" INVOCATION OF PRINCIPLES, NOLAERD ADDED THAT THE THINKING AND DIRECTIONS WHICH MIGHT EMERGE FROM THE EC CONSULTATION PROCESS WOULD PROBABLY INFLUENCE BELGIAN POLICY DECISIONS. HE HAD IN MIND CONSIDERATION OF AN EVENTUAL COMMUNITY-WIDE REGIME FOR CONTINENTAL MARGINS OF MEMBER NATIONS OR SPECIAL TREATMENT BY WIDE-MARGIN MEMBERS ALLOWING EC PARTNERS TO SHARE IN EXPLOITATION OF THESE BROADER MARGINS.

4. COMMENTING IN GENERAL TERMS ON UPCOMING SESSION, NOLAERD SAID BELGIUM IS NOT OPTIMISTIC OVER PROSPECTS FOR PROGRESS. IT BELIEVES THAT TIME IS NOT RIPE FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF REALISTIC FORMULA FOR SEABEDS RESOURCE EXPLOITATION. BELGIANS BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWER IS TO MOVE FORWARD WITH EXPLOITATION OF NATIONAL

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JURISDICTIONS, ALLOWING SUCH OPERATIONS AS WELL AS THE PASSAGE OF TIME TO CREATE A BODY OF EXPERIENCE AND A CLIMATE OF REALISM WHICH MAY EVENTUALLY MAKE POSSIBLE A WORKABLE INTERNATIONAL REGIME.

5. NOLAERD SAID VAN DER ESSEN WOULD RETURN TO MINISTRY ONLY TO DEPART IMMEDIATELY FOR NEW YORK, BUT THAT HE WOULD CALL TO HIS ATTENTION USG VIEWS PRESENTED BY EMBASSY. OLSENUNQTE VANCE

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